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U.S. Department of Justice
Drug Enforcement Administration
Office of Personnel

Diversion Investigator

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witnessing or participating in the routine truction of controlled drugs; and
articipating in special surveys in support drug control.
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Education. DEA requires a bachelor's ree (any major) to qualify at the GS-5 and -7 entrance levels. Subject matter areas st pertinent to job preparation include phar-cology, chemistry, accounting, law, ninal justice, and administration of justice.

Abilities and Skills. Fairly well mirror-the requirements of the job are abilities skills to research records, reconstruct nts, follow leads, and prepare reports on lings, using a variety of sources and niques; interviewing various contacts; ifying in court; recognizing and exploring ls; detecting discrepancies in information; inguishing between relevant and irrelevant rmation; and preparing reports. Also im-tant indications of a candidates potential the abilities to plan, organize and conduct estigations; observe and record facts about sons, objects, and events; distinguish bet-en conclusions and facts; analyze, inter-, and evaluate information obtained; and nderstand and analyze business, commer-, industrial, and agency records.

Knowledge. Most useful are basic techni-s of investigating; rules of evidence; e, application, and interpretation of the ific laws and regulations relating to in-igative jurisdiction; specialized industrial, mercial or agency accounting or record-ing practices; types of equipment used in nical laboratories; and mathematical and ntific terminology.

Personal Traits. Candidates must be in llent physical and mental health, be of moral character (a comprehensive securi-earance is required), and demonstrate in rsonal interview such factors as ap-ance, poise, and communication skills. he should be an asset to DEA.

Q. Wow! You seem to expect a lot. How can anyone have all those abilities, skills, and knowledge?

A. No one is expected to, as stated above. The applicant must only have a required minimum amount (as determined by a DEA personnel specialist) to meet minimum qualification requirements and be considered for selection. These minimum qualitative as well as quantitive requirements are stated in a personnel document called the X-118 which is available for your review in all federal personnel offices. As with other vacancies elsewhere, selections are made from best qualified applicants.

Q. What do you mean by "excellent physical and mental health" and "high moral character", and does this mean something minor in the past can keep me from being hired?

A. The requirements for any federal job include sufficient health to do the job. Because of its nature, investigative work requires individuals with better health than for most jobs. Therefore, tentatively selected candidates are required to obtain a qualifying medical examination to determine physical and mental fitness, and must be free of any impairments which would interfere with normal work performance. Health requirements are specific and clearly stated. If you want to know whether a condition of yours may affect your consideration for employment, you should contact the Health Services Unit of the personnel office.

Many prospective applicants are concerned about what they feel are relatively minor sitiuations in the past which may seem to reflect poorly on them or block them from a sensitive job. When evaluating an applicant's past, DEA takes a look at all relevant facts and does not give undue weight to specific instances. Actions during college years which DEA would consider objectionable would not automatically exclude him/her from employment. It would be in an applicant's interest to honestly complete the application for employment and explain any arrests, illegal use of controlled substances, and any other information requested, including any extenuating circumstances. Negative information explained honestly and completely will be less serious than not telling the truth, since a comprehensive background investigation will probably uncover this information anyway. The decision to employ or not to employ is based on a careful examination of each candidate's qualifications and suitability, and comparisons of all candidates with one another.

Q. What about kinds of appointments and probationary period?

A. New investigators may be hired through a competitive or excepted process, and receive competitive appointments in the competitive service or excepted appointments in the excepted service. There are various differences in the two, but basically competitive appointments have more restrictions and set procedures for hiring, promoting, firing, etc., sometimes called "red tape". The advantage of fewer rules and regulations is that DEA, like the FBI, can quickly hire or fire and thereby keep positions filled with the best people. The disadvantage is that the employee has fewer protections or rights related to adverse actions such as being fired. New investigators in the competitive service initially receive career conditional appointments, and after three years of successful service receive career appointments. Any current federal employee or former federal employee with three or more years of successful service may be hired with fewer requirements than for those new to federal service. A probationary or trial period is required for all new permanent appointments unless one was completed during prior federal service.

A. In addition to complexities of the job, it is sometimes necessary to work irregular hours and travel. There is sometimes frequent contact with drug manufacturers, distributors, pharmacists and physicians. Workload is sometimes heavy.

Q. Can you tell me more about training to learn what I need to know?

A. You will undergo a formal eight-week training program designed to provide the knowledge and skills you will need. Subjects include agency rules, regulations, and procedures; investigative techniques, drug pharmacology, drug abuse education, drug identification, legal procedures, industrial security, and manufacturing techniques. After successfully completing this program, you will be assigned to a DEA office to work with experienced personnel until you can function independently. You will continue to receive training throughout your career to keep you current with developments connected with agency policies and your work. You will be encouraged to take whatever training is felt necessary to sharpen your general skills, as

DEA History and Mission

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) was established on July 1, 1973 to consolidate and expand related functions from several federal agencies, to more efficiently and effectively combat a national threat from drugs. Since then this new agency has further added and strengthened responsibilities in order to better accomplish its mission.DEA develops, plans, and evaluates overall federal drug law enforcement strategy and programs, regulates legal drug-related substances controlled by federal regulations, and often plans and coordinates activities with foreign, state and local jurisdictions. It investigates and prepares the prosecution of suspects of violations of drug trafficking laws and in connection with illicit drugs seized at US borders, US ports-of-entry, and adjacent areas such as those patrolled by the Coast Guard. DEA has highly trained people worldwide who perform a wide variety of functions in connection with gathering and analyzing illegal drugs and controlled substances and their sources and trails, as well as those who apprehend violators of pertinent laws. The DEA mission and significant challenges worldwide require that it have an unusually skilled and dedicated workforce to do various aspects of scientific, financial, investigative, and enforcement work.

Diversion Control

DEA responsibilities for regulating the legal manufacture, distribution and dispensing of controlled substances such as narcotics and dangerous drugs include enforcing specific procedures for compliance with the laws. DEA also establishes import, export and manufacturing quotas. To enforce compliance, diversion investigators periodically inspect the activities of drug manufacturers, distributors, practitioners and other persons who handle, dispense, or prescribe narcotics and dangerous drugs. This includes inspecting record-keeping and security safeguards of controlled substances. Such supervision of legitimate trade insures an adequate supply of drugs for medicinal and research purposes and prevents the diversion of drugs into illicit channels.

Diversion control has a relatively recent history. The Controlled Substances Act of 1970 moved the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD), a predecessor of DEA, to establish investigators to deal directly with the diversion of controlled substances from legitimate channels in which they are manufactured, distributed, and dispensed or disposed. The Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984 and its diversion control amendments gave DEA comprehensive authority for control and responsibility at the practitioner level. One such amendment provided DEA with additional grounds to revoke, suspend or deny the registration of a practitioner. Although primary responsibility for actions against practitioners continues to rest with individual states, when a state licensing authority cannot or does not act, diversion investigators identify and collect information sufficient to administratively take action against a practitioner's registration. More on the nature of investigator work later in this brochure.

Career Development

All employees establish their own career development plans, with the assistance of their supervisors, through which they target their own goals and means reaching them. Both employees and their supervisors regularly review these career development plans and the progress in reaching goals.

Promotions— After a year of satisfactory performance one is normally promoted to the next level of the career ladder for diversion investigators, which starts at GS-5 and progresses next to GS-7, then GS-9, then the journeyman GS-11 level. Whether someone starts and the GS-5 or GS-7 level will depend upon an evaluation of his/her qualifications. New investigators are only hired at these two levels. Any promotions after reaching the top of the career ladder will be in accordance with the DEA's Merit Promotion Plan, which provides procedures that must be followed for employees to be considered for vacancies, including those of higher grades. Announcements of these vacancies with procedures for applying are normally posted in key locations, and employees may write or call the personnel office for more information. Selections and promotions to GS-12 and above normally require recommendations by a review committee. Employees have opportunities throughout their careers to advance consistent with their demonstrated potential and in accordance with the Merit Promotion Plan. This plan assures that vacancies are filled on the basis of merit with the best qualified persons available.

Training— On-the-Job Training (OJT) begins when entering on duty, and includes initial close monitoring and guidance, and continuing daily interactions with senior employees. Formal training, which is provided shortly after being hired (exact schedule varies according to such factors as local office requirements and availability of classes), is at a federal training facility. It will extensively cover controlled substances and investigative principles and techniques. This includes individual and group exercises. Employees receive training periodically throughout their careers to update and gain new knowledge and skills.

Mobility Policy— Mobility is a condition of employment, and DEA needs will be the first consideration; however, employees' preferences and circumstances are also important factors considered before reassignments are made. Travel and transportation costs for relocation to an emloyee's first post of duty are at the employee's own expense for his/her first federal appointment, but DEA will pay costs for subsequent moves determined to be in the best interests of DEA. Eligibility for reimbursement for such expenses is contingent upon the employee signing an agreement to remain in the federal service for at least one year following any transfer, and should be understood in advance.

Travel Opportunities and Requirements

Employees receive significant travel opportunities throughout their careers. Diversion investigator positions are at numerous locations throughout the United States, and one may apply for reassignments and promotions to vacancies as they occur. One may also notify management of any desires for consideration for noncompetitive reassignments to various locations, which management will consider in terms of the employee's individual career plan, demonstrated potential, and consistency with DEA's requirements. The work itself may require frequent travel for periods up to several weeks.

Compensation

Pay Systems— Most employees are paid in accordance with the General Schedule (GS), which consists of eighteen grades, each of which has ten within-grades or steps with progressively higher salary rates. One normally advances to higher steps after satisfactory performance. Some employees at GS-13 and above who are assigned to the Performance Management Recognition System (PMRS) are

paid in accordance with the merit pay system which links salary increases to performance appraisals.

Grade Determinations— Grades of individual positions are determined in accordance with the federal classification system. Personnel Specialists use written guides to determine titles and grades.

Salary— Salary rates for all GS grades are set by Congress, which periodically adjusts them (approximately annually). An employee receives the pay rate for a specific step (he/she normally starts at Step 1) within a grade. The grade level and resulting salary for a new employee depend upon his/her qualifications (length and kind of education and experience). Trainee grade levels normally start at GS-5 or GS-7. Actual salary rates for grade and step levels are listed on publicly available salary scales. An employee can expect his/her salary to increase regularly (assuming satisfactory performance) by annual promotions to the top of the career ladder, then by additional competitive promotions and step increases.

Overtime Pay— Employees generally receive one and one-half their hourly rate for overtime (work in excess of eight hours a day or 40 hours a week). Federal laws governing this and other forms of premium pay (night differential, holiday pay, etc.) are rather complex and therefore are not covered here. However, this information is readily available in the Pay and Position Management Unit of the Office of Personnel.

Leave— There are from 13 to 26 days of annual leave (paid vacation), 13 days of sick leave, and ten federal holidays each year. Annual leave amounts depend upon numbers of years of federal service credited, including certain military service.

Insurance and Retirement— Employees have the option of several group health insurance plans, a low-cost life insurance plan, and a retirement program, with the Federal Government sharing in some of the costs.

Recognition— DEA's incentive awards program offers special recognition for superior work performance, specific outstanding accomplishments, and suggestions which save the government money or otherwise improve efficiency. Official recognition may be at any of various levels, including presentations by the DEA Administrator in a formal ceremony. Monetary awards include cash and salary increases.

Nature of Work

To accomplish their primary mission-ensure that all legitimate handlers of controlled substances are in compliance with federal laws and regulations- diversion investigators engage in a wide range of activities, such as those described below.

The cyclic investigation of registered handlers of controlled substances deters diversion through evaluation of the registrant's record-keeping procedures, security safeguards, and general compliance with the CSA and implementing regulations. Pre-registration investigations ensure that applicants will operate consistent with the public health and also reduce the possibility of registering unauthorized subjects.

Frequently, investigators are involved in targeted complaint investigations aimed at the most serious registrant violators of controlled substance laws and regulations. These registrants have documented or suspected histories of diversion of drugs into illicit market. Investigators collect and analyze information developed during their investigations and consult with supervisory personnel to determine if criminal prosecution is warranted. Investigators spend a major portion of their field investigations identifying and collecting information to support actions against practitioners. As investigators do not carry weapons, make undercover purchases of evidence, control or pay confidential informants, conduct surveillance, perform arrests, or execute search warrants, they work closely with special agents who help them in these areas. Much of the information gathered through these investigations are distributed within DEA as well as to other federal, state, and local law enforcement and regulatory agencies. Analysis of information gathered from all investigations is used to formulate long-range agency strategies.

Also, to assist state and local governments in improving their capabilities to suppress diversion of controlled substances, DEA was given the authority to make periodic assessments of state and local capabilities, provide advice to state and local governments, and establish cooperative investigative efforts. Further, grants to state and local governments are authorized for up to 80% of the costs for such purposes as conducting investigations and prosecutions of diversion, preventing and detecting forged prescriptions and providing law enforcement and regulatory training. DEA investigators are called upon to evaluate these programs and assist in upgrading state capabilities.

Based on their investigations, investigators prepare detailed written reports which include all relevent information pertaining to evidence, statements of witnesses and defendants, and any other information necessary during court proceedings. They work closely with attorneys for DEA, state and local prosecutors, and the United States Attorney's Office. They testify on the results of their investigations during trials, grand jury proceedings and administrative actions.

In addition to their investigative duties, investigators destroy seized surplus or unwanted controlled substances. They also participate in voluntary compliance programs aimed at upgrading the level of self-regulation and enforcement by practitioners and industry, and other programs designed to stem the diversion of controlled substances. They use these and other methods of training and education.

Foreign-based investigators are experts in legal and regulatory matters pertaining to narcotics and psychotropic substances and serve as advisors/consultants to foreign governments in establishing anti-diversion programs.

Questions and Answers

Q. What kinds of assignments or work would I do?

A. Investigators spend the largest portion of their time investigating practitioners who dispense controlled substances by prescription. This involves checking their records and practices. However, investigators also investigate all other levels of the distribution chain, up to the manufacturer. In addition, investigators do a wide range of other work such as preparing detailed reports on findings for use by other DEA personnel such as agents, other investigators, and prosecutors, and presenting this information in court. Investigators share information and participate with officials of state, local, and foreign governments. Specific activities vary with each individual assignment; however, in general the following can be expected:

— Making comprehensive investigations to determine the adequacy of controls employed by companies to prevent illegal diversion of controlled drugs (or other substances);
— examining books and records of registrants such as physicians and pharmacies;
— developing information which may lead to criminal, civil or administrative action;

— verifying receipts of shipments and distribution of controlled substances;
— witnessing or participating in the routine destruction of controlled drugs; and
— participating in special surveys in support of drug control.

Also see the sections titled "Diversion Control" and "Nature of Work" in this brochure.

Q. What qualifications do I need to get a job?

A. DEA does not require a specific set of qualifications; it is unlikely that any candidate would have all the knowledge and skills desirable for an investigator job. Rather, DEA looks for a wide range of knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal traits. However, the following is a good guide.

1. Education. DEA requires a bachelor's degree (any major) to qualify at the GS-5 and GS-7 entrance levels. Subject matter areas most pertinent to job preparation include pharmacology, chemistry, accounting, law, criminal justice, and administration of justice.

2. Abilities and Skills. Fairly well mirroring the requirements of the job are abilities and skills to research records, reconstruct events, follow leads, and prepare reports on findings, using a variety of sources and techniques; interviewing various contacts; testifying in court; recognizing and exploring leads; detecting discrepancies in information; distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information; and preparing reports. Also important indications of a candidates potential are the abilities to plan, organize and conduct investigations; observe and record facts about persons, objects, and events; distinguish between conclusions and facts; analyze, interpret, and evaluate information obtained; and to understand and analyze business, commercial, industrial, and agency records.

3. Knowledge. Most useful are basic techniques of investigating; rules of evidence; scope, application, and interpretation of the specific laws and regulations relating to investigative jurisdiction; specialized industrial, commercial or agency accounting or record-keeping practices; types of equipment used in technical laboratories; and mathematical and scientific terminology.

4. Personal Traits. Candidates must be in excellent physical and mental health, be of high moral character (a comprehensive security clearance is required), and demonstrate in a personal interview such factors as appearance, poise, and communication skills. He/she should be an asset to DEA.

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